



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TWENTY DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY TO FELONY CHARGES FOR IMPROPERLY BILLING MEDICARE FOR OVER \$25 MILLION IN DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT CASE.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 26, 2003, defendants Ani Edem, Nsikan Edem and Mark Lewandowski pled guilty to felony charges just minutes before jury selection was to begin at trial. The Edems pled to conspiracy, health care fraud, false claims, conspiracy to money launder, promotional money laundering, transactional money laundering and forfeiture. Mark Lewandowski pled to conspiracy, health care fraud, false claims, and conspiracy to money launder. Overall, twenty (20) defendants each pled guilty to multiple felony charges from either the original or superseding indictments. These defendants created approximately thirty (30) sham durable medical equipment (DME) entities in the western United States. For three and one half (3 ½) years, they fraudulently billed Medicare for over \$25 million in DME equipment, and were paid approximately \$15 million. Defendants improperly obtained the names and Medicare numbers for thousands of patients. Defendants then fraudulently billed Medicare for DME equipment that was either not provided

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to Medicare beneficiaries and/or ordered by a physician. Defendants fraudulently billed for expensive motorized wheelchairs, hospital beds and special mattresses, and enteral nutrition (i.e. Ensure). The defendants created false medical records, in which they forged physician and patient signatures, and submitted these fabricated records in response to audit requests from Medicare. The twenty (20) defendants who pleaded guilty were the “owners,” “marketers,” “billers,” and “staffers” who perpetrated this scheme.

The investigation was conducted by Health and Human Services–Office of Inspector General.

The prosecution is being handled by Kimberly Hare, Janet Walsh, Ashley Adams and Peter Sexton, Assistant United States Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-01-986-PHX-FJM
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